

From: Kaiser Health News
Sent: Monday, October 3, 2016 9:23 AM
To: Kimble, L. Carter
Subject: KHN Morning Briefing: October 3, 2016

Not rendering correctly? View this email as a web page [here](#).
Not a subscriber? [Sign up](#)

Morning Briefing

Monday, October 03, 2016

Check [Kaiser Health News](#) online for the latest headlines

In This Edition:

KAISER HEALTH NEWS ORIGINAL STORIES

1. [Young Boy's Struggle To Survive Sparked Push For Drugs For Terminally Ill](#)
2. [Video Chat? In Rural Areas Combating Drug Addiction, A New Way To Connect With Help](#)
3. [Many Doctors Treating Alcohol Problems Overlook Successful Drugs](#)
4. [Saying Goodbye, The Right Way](#)
5. [Political Cartoon: 'Doublespeak'](#)

HEALTH LAW ISSUES AND IMPLEMENTATION

6. [Health Law's Future Post-Obama Depends On Ability To Evolve](#)

MARKETPLACE

7. [Insurance Industry's Courting Of State Officials Raises Concerns](#)
8. [Avoiding Medical Bill Mistakes](#)

ADMINISTRATION NEWS

9. [Desperate Local Officials Hungry For Newly Approved Zika Funds](#)

PHARMACEUTICALS

10. [Drugmakers, Under Scrutiny, Find Scapegoat For Prices In Form Of Pharmacy-Benefit Managers](#)

CAMPAIGN 2016

11. [Pence Key To Wooing Once-Skittish Anti-Abortion Leaders Back To Trump](#)

MEDICARE

12. House Republicans Call For Medicare To Halt Bundled Payment Reforms

MEDICAID

13. Feds Approve Arizona Plan To Revamp Medicaid, But Reject Several Key Provisions

PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION

14. Japanese Scientist Awarded Nobel Prize In Medicine For Work With Cells

15. Overdosing At A Red Robin: Opioid Abuse No Longer Just On Fringes Of Society

16. An Artificial Pancreas: The \$1M Challenge That Just Came To Fruition

17. Games' Promises Of A Better Brain Lack Scientific Backing, Exhaustive Analysis Finds

18. Outbreak In California Highlights Dangers Of Water Used In Dental Procedures

HEALTH IT

19. Pilot Program Uses Telemedicine To Treat Appalachia's Painkiller Addiction Crisis

STATE WATCH

20. State Highlights: Calif.'s Biggest Industry Is Now Medical Care; Urgent Care Biz Takes Hold In Twin Cities

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

21. Positive And Negative Takes On Obamacare's Future

22. State Ballot Initiatives, Policy Issues Draw Editorial Page Attention

23. Viewpoints: Health Costs At Home And Abroad; Candidates' Health Policy Details; VA And Suicides

From Kaiser Health News:

KAISER HEALTH NEWS ORIGINAL STORIES

1. Young Boy's Struggle To Survive Sparked Push For Drugs For Terminally Ill

Ten-year-old Josh Hardy died last month. His struggle to survive helped to spur laws to get unapproved drugs to the terminally ill. (Liz Szabo, 10/3)

2. Video Chat? In Rural Areas Combating Drug Addiction, A New Way To Connect With Help

The federal government is supporting efforts to test whether telemedicine strategies can be used to treat Appalachia's painkiller addiction crisis. (Shefali Luthra, 10/3)

3. Many Doctors Treating Alcohol Problems Overlook Successful Drugs

Two prescription medications have been found to be successful in helping many patients with alcohol cravings. Yet they are rarely used and many patients don't know they exist. (Emma Yasinski, 10/3)

4. Saying Goodbye, The Right Way

Twenty dying people, at peace with their mortality, shared their views on life, love and death with a Los Angeles artist for an exhibit at the Museum of Tolerance. (Anna Gorman, 10/3)

5. Political Cartoon: 'Doublespeak'

Kaiser Health News provides a fresh take on health policy developments with "Political Cartoon: 'Doublespeak'" by Pat Bagley, The Salt Lake Tribune.

Here's today's health policy haiku:

A \$600 EXPIRATION DATE

The need to replace
Epipens regularly
Adds to cost concerns.

- Jeff Swiatek

If you have a health policy haiku to share, please [Contact Us](#) and let us know if you want us to include your name. Keep in mind that we give extra points if you link back to a KHN original story.

Summaries Of The News:

HEALTH LAW ISSUES AND IMPLEMENTATION

6. Health Law's Future Post-Obama Depends On Ability To Evolve

Even supporters say it has structural and technical problems. And both presidential candidates have made clear they would seek to change at least some aspects of the law. In other news, the administration gives up the fight over bare-bones plans, and Minnesota's insurance regulator sounds the alarm on the state's marketplace.

[The New York Times: Ailing Obama Health Care Act May Have To Change To Survive](#)

The fierce struggle to enact and carry out the Affordable Care Act was supposed to put an end to 75 years of fighting for a health care system to insure all Americans. Instead, the law's troubles could make it just a way station on the road to another, more stable health care system, the shape of which could be determined on Election Day. Seeing a lack of competition in many of the health law's online insurance marketplaces, Hillary Clinton, President Obama and much of the Democratic Party are calling for more government, not less. (Pear, 10/2)

[The Wall Street Journal: Obama Administration Ends Drive To Ban Bare-Bones Health Plans](#)

The Obama administration has ended a bid to ban the sale of bare-bones health plans after losing a court fight on the issue this summer. Government lawyers told a federal court earlier this month they would accept its decision that they had overstepped by seeking to effectively end so-called fixed indemnity plans, which are low-cost but pay out only set cash amounts for medical events such as a hospital visit or prescription purchase. (Radnofsky, 9/30)

[The Associated Press: Minnesota Regulator: Insurance Market In Dire Situation](#)

Minnesota's individual health care market is in "an emergency situation," the state's top industry regulator said Friday, noting that it took the approval of massive rate increases to persuade all its remaining insurance companies not to pull out for next year. (Potter, 9/30)

[Morning Consult: Minn. Insurance Commissioner Announces Major Premium Hikes, Calls For Exchange Reforms](#)

Minnesota's commerce commissioner called for reforms to strengthen the federal marketplace Friday after announcing monthly premium increases of at least 50 percent for 2017. "While federal tax credits will help make monthly premiums more affordable for many Minnesotans, these rising insurance rates are both unsustainable and unfair," Minnesota Commerce Commissioner Mike Rothman said in a statement. "Middle-class Minnesotans in particular are being crushed by the heavy burden of these costs. ..." The state improved monthly premium increases between 50 percent and 67 percent for the seven insurers offering plans on the state's exchange, MNsure, in 2017. Approximately 250,000 in the state purchase insurance through the state's marketplace, about 5 percent of the state's population. (McIntire, 9/30)

[The Pioneer Press: 'Emergency' For Minnesota As Huge Insurance Premium Hikes Confirmed](#)

Minnesota's individual insurance market is in danger of collapse, Commerce Commissioner Mike Rothman said Friday as he announced massive premium increases for 2017 plans. (Montgomery, 9/30)

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: Common Ground Insurance Co-Op Secures Financing](#)

Common Ground Healthcare Cooperative said Friday it has received a capital infusion that will enable it to remain in business and continue to sell health plans next year. The cooperative said that under terms of its agreement, it could not disclose the source or amount of the financing it received. (Boulton, 9/30)

Meanwhile, NPR takes a look back at a different federal health law —

[NPR: Hill-Burton Act: A Health Care Milestone Worth Remembering](#)

People might be forgiven for thinking that the Affordable Care Act is the federal government's boldest intrusion into the private business of health care. But few know about a 70-year-old law that is responsible for the construction of much of our health system's infrastructure. The law's latest anniversary came and went without much notice in August. (Schumann, 10/2)

MARKETPLACE

7. Insurance Industry's Courting Of State Officials Raises Concerns

A Center for Public Integrity investigation finds strong ties between some state insurance commissioners and the industry they regulate. Other outlets report on insurance industry news, including updates on the proposed merger between Anthem and Cigna, a New Jersey case about Horizon Blue Cross and Blue Shield, high-deductible plans and military coverage for transgender

services.

[Center for Public Integrity/The Washington Post: Drinks, Junkets And Jobs: How The Insurance Industry Courts State Commissioners](#)

When the Arkansas insurance commissioner weighed the merits of a hospital's billing complaint against United Healthcare, her interactions with one of the nation's largest health insurers extended far beyond her department's hearing room. During months of deliberations, Commissioner Julie Benafield Bowman met repeatedly with United Healthcare lawyers and lobbyists over lunch and drinks at venues such as the Country Club of Little Rock. ... Nearly two years later, ... she was working for United Healthcare, having joined at least three of her predecessors representing insurers in Arkansas. ... An investigation by the Center for Public Integrity found that half of the 109 state insurance commissioners who have left their posts in the past decade have gone on to work for the industry they used to regulate. (Mishak, 10/2)

[Reuters: Anthem Judge Considering Splitting Merger Trial Into Two Sections](#)

The judge who will rule on whether the government may stop health insurer Anthem from buying competitor Cigna said Friday that she was considering splitting the trial into phases. Judge Amy Berman Jackson of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia said that she was mulling hearing separately about the effect of the merger on the national market in one phase and on local markets in a second phase with a potential decision after the first set of arguments. (Bartz, 9/30)

[Modern Healthcare: N.J. Supreme Court Declines To Hear Horizon Tiered Health Plan Challenge](#)

The Supreme Court of New Jersey declined to review a case this week that alleges state regulators shouldn't have allowed Horizon Blue Cross and Blue Shield to relegate hospitals to a tiered network. The decision by the higher court deals a blow to the three hospitals part of the suit. (Castellucci, 9/30)

[The Houston Chronicle: A Shift In Coverage Has Even The Insured Skipping Medical Care](#)

This year, for the first time, a majority threshold was crossed as 51 percent of American workers have a deductible of at least \$1,000. That compares with just 10 percent a decade ago, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation's 2016 annual health benefits survey released in September. Not only has the number of plans with deductibles grown, so, too, has the amount patients must come up with before coverage kicks in. Today, the average deductible in individual plans that have one is \$1,478. In 2006, according to Kaiser, it was \$584. (Deam, 10/1)

[The Associated Press: Hope, Relief For Transgender Military Families In New Policy](#)

Like many transgender teens, Jenn Brewer faced bullying when she came out. Some classmates called her "tranny," and a few teachers refused to address the 13-year-old by anything other than her male birth name, she said. But she and her family found that the biggest difficulty came from her father's employer: the U.S. military. Jenn's father is an Army staff sergeant at Virginia's Fort Belvoir, and his military health insurance refused to cover private counseling to support the changes his daughter was embracing. (Finley, 10/2)

8. Avoiding Medical Bill Mistakes

The Associated Press offers strategies to avoid paying health care bills that include errors. Also in the news, how getting a flu shot can help one's pocketbook.

[The Associated Press: Consider A Second Opinion On That Medical Bill](#)

If a medical bill shows up, don't pay it right away. At least that's the advice of some experts who say you should closely review all your medical billing information for any errors first. The American Medical Association estimates that 7.1 percent of bills paid by commercial health insurers contain errors, while others estimate errors are far more common than that. (Sell, 10/2)

[The Fiscal Times: Why Getting A Flu Shot Is Good For Your Pocketbook](#)

Only about six in 10 Americans in that age group get the flu shot. While that's higher than the overall national average of 46 percent, it's below the Centers for Disease Control's target of 70 percent flu vaccine coverage, according to new data from the CDC. The reason that health officials are concerned about older adults is that they're more likely to be hospitalized or die as a result of catching the flu. Even months after they've recovered, older adults who've had the flu remain at higher risk of a heart attack or stroke. (Braverman, 9/30)

ADMINISTRATION NEWS

9. Desperate Local Officials Hungry For Newly Approved Zika Funds

During Congress' months-long battle, local health departments had to beg and borrow money to cover their Zika response efforts. Now they might finally be able to get some help. In other news, the CDC warns that men exposed to Zika should wait at least six months before trying to have a child, a study finds that complications for children who contract the virus after birth are rare, and more stories.

[The Washington Post: U.S. Health Officials Are Itching To Use The Zika Funds They've Begged For All Year](#)

Congress took nearly eight months to send money to help fight a dire public health threat. Now that lawmakers have approved \$1.1 billion, health officials say the funds can't arrive quickly enough to make up for lost time. "The point is to make sure that it reaches the local health department," said Dallas County Health Director Zach Thompson. "When it gets down to it, all public health is local when you are responding to an outbreak." (Sun and Dennis, 9/30)

[Health News Florida: Questions Remain As To How, When Federal Zika Funds Will Be Distributed To Florida](#)

A measure signed into law by President Obama includes money to help combat the Zika virus. Florida is expected to be one of the areas to get a large amount of the funds. That's in addition to the millions of dollars in state money Governor Rick Scott has already set aside in the Zika fight. But, questions now remain about when and how the funds will be distributed to help affected Floridians. (Cordner, 9/30)

[NPR: CDC Tells Men Exposed To Zika To Delay Getting A Partner Pregnant](#)

Men who may have been exposed to the Zika virus should wait at least six months before trying to conceive a child with a partner, regardless of whether they ever had any symptoms, federal health officials are recommending. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had previously recommended that only men with Zika symptoms had to wait that long. Those who may have been exposed to Zika but never developed any symptoms were told to hold off on trying to conceive for just eight weeks. (Stein, 9/30)

[Morning Consult: CDC Lengthens Suggested Time Couples With Zika Risk Should Wait Before Pregnancy](#)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says couples with possible Zika risk should wait much longer before trying to get pregnant. The agency said Friday that couples in which the man has possibly been exposed to Zika but is not displaying symptoms should wait six months before trying to get pregnant, rather than eight weeks as the agency previously advised. (McIntire, 9/30)

[The Hill: Couples With Zika Risk Told To Wait Much Longer To Become Pregnant](#)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is stepping up its warnings about the Zika

virus for couples trying to become pregnant. CDC officials said Friday that women should wait at least six months before trying to get pregnant if their partner has possible Zika exposure. The previous recommendation had been eight weeks. (Ferris, 9/30)

The New York Times: Children Who Get Zika After Birth Tend Not To Fall Seriously Ill, Study Finds
Serious complications are rare among children infected with the Zika virus after birth, federal health researchers concluded in a study published on Friday — a rare bright spot in the unfolding story of the epidemic. (Saint Louis and McNeil, 9/30)

Orlando Sentinel: Zika Update: Orange County Gets 3 New Cases; CDC Updates Pre-Pregnancy And Sex Recommendations

Three new travel-related Zika cases in Orange County were confirmed by the state health department on Friday, bringing the county's total to 84. Since earlier this year, Osceola County has reported 30 travel-related Zika cases, while Seminole has reported 21 and Lake has reported 3. (Miller, 10/3)

Health News Florida: Zika Mystery: How Did A 73-Year-Old Man Infect His Son?

Zika wasn't even on Dr. Sankar Swaminathan's mind when he first examined a severely ill 73-year-old man in a Salt Lake City hospital in June. The patient had just returned from a visit to Mexico when he suddenly fell violently ill. "We were not thinking about Zika at all because Zika usually does not cause severe illness, in fact it almost never does," says Swaminathan, chief of the division of infectious diseases at the University of Utah. (Beaubien, 9/30)

The Newnan Times-Herald: City Quietly Ends Mosquito Fogging Program

As summer melts away, one traditional feature was absent this year, nighttime mosquito fogging truck trips noisily sputtering up and down Newnan streets. The city of Newnan has been spraying for mosquitoes for many years. Exactly how many years seems to be lost in the mists of time, but it has been at least 25 years. But late in the summer of 2015, the city quietly suspended its "low volume fogging" mosquito control program in response to a campaign by No Spray Newnan, a group of local residents who advocated for a better way to control mosquitoes, and asked for their own yards not to be sprayed. (Campbell, 10/1)

PHARMACEUTICALS

10. Drugmakers, Under Scrutiny, Find Scapegoat For Prices In Form Of Pharmacy-Benefit Managers

Pharmaceutical execs say high prices aren't their fault; instead it's the system that allows PBMs to benefit from the rebates they negotiate. Meanwhile, The Associated Press talks to the chief medical officer of Express Scripts, the largest pharmacy benefit management organization in the United States.

The Wall Street Journal: Drugmakers Point Finger At Middlemen For Rising Drug Prices

As U.S. drug prices rise, drugmakers are playing down their role, instead heaping blame on the middlemen who help determine how medicines are priced. Some of the sharpest criticism has come from drug-industry executives who have been grilled by lawmakers or skewered on social media over sharp price increases on their products. They include the chief of Mylan NV, maker of the lifesaving EpiPen, who says her company is being tarred unfairly for a dysfunctional system in which wholesalers, pharmacies and pharmacy-benefit managers take their own cut of each prescription. (Walker, 10/2)

[The Associated Press: Insider Q&A: A Front-Row Seat For The Drug Pricing Battle](#)

Dr. Steve Miller, the chief medical officer of Express Scripts, sits at the center of the storm over rising drug prices. ... Miller has watched super-sized drug prices infuriate patients and strain the health care system with growing frequency, starting when a new hepatitis C drug hit the market at \$84,000 for a course of treatment and continuing through the recent revelation that the price of Mylan's EpiPen rose more than 500 percent since 2007. (10/2)

[The Mercury News: EpiPen Outrage: It Costs About \\$8 To Make A 2-Pack, Engineers Say](#)

Mylan insists most patients pay less than \$50 out of pocket for a two-pack, though critics say insurers pass the higher wholesale drug costs along to consumers in other ways. But what does it really cost to make? To get the answer, Wallace and Krevitt dissected a two-pack of EpiPens into individual pieces, carefully weighed each plastic part and applied an industry-standard method for analyzing the manufacturing costs. (Seipel, 10/1)

In other pharmaceutical news —

[The New York Times: New Drug For Severe Eczema Is Successful In 2 New Trials](#)

The disease is characterized by an itching, oozing rash that can cover almost all of the skin. The constant itch, to say nothing of the disfigurement, can be so unbearable that many patients consider suicide. There has never been a safe and effective treatment. On Saturday, the results of two large clinical trials of a new drug offered hope to the estimated 1.6 million adult Americans with an uncontrolled, moderate-to-severe form of the disease, atopic dermatitis, which is a type of eczema. (Kolata, 10/1)

[The Wall Street Journal: Novo Nordisk Bets On Riskier Insulin Research](#)

Nearly 10 years ago, executives at Novo Nordisk A/S wondered whether the company's decadeslong quest to make ever-better insulin had finally come to an end. The trigger was an impressive set of results for the company's newest insulin that suggested the product would be difficult to improve upon. (Roland, 10/2)

[Kaiser Health News: Young Boy's Struggle To Survive Sparked Push For Drugs For Terminally Ill](#)

At age 7, Josh Hardy became the poster child for a movement to help desperately ill or dying patients access experimental therapies which, they hope, will save their lives. People around the world rallied 2½ years ago when a small biotech company refused to provide the Fredericksburg, Va., boy, who had battled cancer since infancy, with an experimental drug that doctors believed could save Josh from a life-threatening infection. Within days, a social media campaign called #SaveJosh, sparked by his mother's anguished Facebook post and propelled by well-connected supporters, spurred thousands of people to contact the company, Chimerix Inc. of North Carolina, prompting it to release the drug. (Szabo, 10/3)

CAMPAIGN 2016

[11. Pence Key To Wooing Once-Skittish Anti-Abortion Leaders Back To Trump](#)

"[Mike Pence is] just rock-solid on the issue of life, and no one will ever doubt his integrity on the issue or his willingness to lead on the issue," says Penny Nance, chief executive of Concerned Women for America.

[The Washington Post: There's A Reason Many Antiabortion Leaders Support Trump: His Running Mate](#)

In January, Marjorie Dannenfelser and nine other antiabortion activists urged Iowa voters to support

anyone but Donald Trump. Now she is fully backing the Republican nominee, chairing the pro-life coalition of a man the activists said “cannot be trusted.” The dramatic about-face for Dannenfelser and other religious and social conservatives who were once leery of supporting a brash, thrice-married New Yorker who supported abortion rights and called Holy Communion a “little cracker” is due in large part to one man: Indiana Gov. Mike Pence. (Zezima, 10/1)

In other news —

[Texas Tribune: New Texas Health Executive Will Oversee Abstinence, Abortion Programs](#)

As part of a legislatively ordered restructuring of Texas health agencies, the state health commission has begun advertising for someone to fill a new executive job overseeing “women’s education services” — including abstinence education and counseling on alternatives to abortion. The position could pay six figures. The new Director of Women’s Education Services would be part of the newly formed Women’s Education Services Unit, according to a job listing posted to the health agency’s website, responsible for overseeing three hot-button programs previously run by a sister agency — abstinence education, abortion alternatives and funding for judicial bypass proceedings for minors seeking abortion. (Ura, 9/30)

MEDICARE

12. House Republicans Call For Medicare To Halt Bundled Payment Reforms

At the crux of the GOP complaints is the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation, an agency established by the health law to find ways to save Medicare money. The letter specifically mentioned two bundled payment programs, one for knee and hip replacement surgeries and the other for cardiac bypass surgeries and heart attacks. It also criticizes the agency’s proposal to change reimbursements for drugs administered in doctors’ offices.

[Modern Healthcare: House Republicans Tell CMS To Stop Mandatory Involvement In Payment Reform Proposal](#)

House Republicans are asking the CMS to stop new mandatory payment models they say threaten quality of care and overstep the agency’s bounds. In a letter to CMS Acting Administrator Andy Slavitt and Chief Medical Officer Patrick Conway, the 179 members of the House say the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation has “exceeded its authority” and “patients are blindly being forced into high-risk government-dictated reforms with unknown impacts.” (Muchmore, 9/30)

[The Hill: Lawmakers Call For End To Medicare 'Experiments'](#)

The 179 House lawmakers, led by Reps. Tom Price (R-Ga.), Charles Boustany (R-La.) and Erik Paulsen (R-Minn.), are criticizing Medicare reforms put forward by an organization created by ObamaCare. ... Among these initiatives are “bundled payments” for hip and knee replacements and cardiac care, meaning that instead of paying individually for each test and procedure, Medicare pays a set amount for an entire episode of care. There is also a controversial initiative to shift Medicare payments for some drugs toward a flat fee, as opposed to a percentage of the cost of the drug, which the administration argues provides an incentive to prescribe pricier medicines. (Sullivan, 9/30)

[The Baltimore Sun: Maryland Works To Bring Doctors, Nursing Homes Into Medicare Cost Control Program](#)

Maryland faces a year-end deadline to submit a plan to expand a massive experiment in how it manages health care costs by including doctors, nursing homes and other health care providers. (Gantz, 10/1)

MEDICAID

13. Feds Approve Arizona Plan To Revamp Medicaid, But Reject Several Key Provisions

The changes proposed by Gov. Doug Ducey include establishing a requirement that the low-income residents on the Medicaid program contribute to an account to help pay for services such as dental and vision care. The federal government, however, rejected the governor's request to institute a requirement that Medicaid enrollees look for work and that they be limited to five years of coverage.

[Arizona Republic: Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey's Plan To Modernize Medicaid Wins Approval](#)

Gov. Doug Ducey's plan to modernize Arizona's Medicaid program won approval Friday from the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, but the approved plan does not include a job-search requirement or five-year limit on benefits that the governor had sought. The letter from Acting CMS Administrator Andrew Slavitt states the Arizona Medicaid demonstration, called Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) is extended five years through Sept. 30, 2021. The changes call for recipients to contribute to an account "similar to a Health Savings Account – to be used for services not currently covered by Medicaid, including dental, vision, weight loss and more," AHCCCS said in a news release. (Theobald, 9/30)

[Tucson.com/Arizona Daily Star: Feds Reject Parts Of Arizona Plan To Make Medicaid Changes](#)

Federal officials have rejected a bid by Arizona lawmakers and Gov. Doug Ducey to require Medicaid recipients to work and to limit their lifetime coverage to five years. In a letter Friday to state officials, Andrew Slavitt, the acting administrator for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, said such limits would "undermine access to care and do not support the objectives of the program." Slavitt also rebuffed the state's attempt to impose a charge on recipients who earn less than the federal poverty level. (Fischer, 10/1)

PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION

14. Japanese Scientist Awarded Nobel Prize In Medicine For Work With Cells

Yoshinori Ohsumi's work has led to key understandings about how cells adapt in response to stresses such as starvation and infection, which could help with the treatment of such diseases as cancer and Alzheimer's.

[The Washington Post: Nobel Prize In Medicine Awarded To Japan's Yoshinori Ohsumi For Work On 'Cell Recycling'](#)

Japanese biologist Yoshinori Ohsumi was awarded the 2016 Nobel Prize in Medicine on Monday for discovering and elucidating a key mechanism in our body's defense system that involves degrading and recycling parts of cells. Known as autophagy, this process plays an important role in cancer, Alzheimer's, type 2 diabetes, birth defects from Zika virus and numerous other devastating diseases. (Cha, 10/3)

[NPR: Japanese Biologist Wins Nobel Prize In Medicine Or Physiology](#)

According to statement from the Nobel prize committee, Ohsumi's work opened the path to understanding how cells adapt to starvation or respond to infection. Mutations in the genes that control the process of autophagy can lead to several conditions, including cancer and neurological disease. Each Nobel prize is worth about \$930,000. In most years, the prize is shared among two or more scientists. This year's prize goes to Ohsumi alone. (Stein, 10/3)

15. Overdosing At A Red Robin: Opioid Abuse No Longer Just On Fringes Of Society

"What does that tell you, the death in the mall?" says Luke Nasta, the director of an addiction treatment center, of a recent overdose on Staten Island. "It's part of mainstream society." In other news, the White House's drug czar, who has had his own troubles in the past, speaks with Politico about combating substance abuse in the country.

[The New York Times: A Death On Staten Island Highlights Heroin's Place In 'Mainstream Society'](#)

The man entered the Red Robin restaurant inside the Staten Island Mall two minutes after 6 p.m. on a Friday. He walked straight past the booths and tables and entered the men's room. A manager would find him there seven minutes later, lying on the floor with a needle and foaming at the mouth. His name was Jonathan Ayers, 27, and he was declared dead within the hour that evening, Sept. 9, apparently of a heroin overdose. (Wilson, 10/2)

[Politico: The White House Drug Czar On Fighting Addictions — Including His Own](#)

Some prominent politicians — think Donald Trump — say that to fight the nation's drug problems, we need to put up more walls. Michael Botticelli believes in tearing them down. "In the past, we've criminalized people with addiction," the White House drug czar told POLITICO's "Pulse Check" podcast, arguing that aggressive prosecution of some drug users was "really bad public policy." Instead, he says the nation needs a kinder, gentler approach to fighting drug misuse — and as a recovering alcoholic, Botticelli argues he's just the man for the job. (Diamond, 9/30)

In news out of the states about the crisis —

[The Baltimore Sun: Opioid Overdose Deaths Up 130 Percent Among Marylanders 55 And Older](#)

For all the attention on young people caught in the grip of the nation's opioid addiction epidemic, the spotlight has missed the growing population of older Americans quietly living, and increasingly dying, as addicts. (Cohn, 10/1)

[Courier-Post: In NJ, Key Opioid Laws Go Through Him](#)

Drugmakers that produce painkillers and allied advocacy groups have sent more than \$1 million in political contributions to candidates for state office in New Jersey over the last 10 years — part of what a joint investigation by The Associated Press and the Center for Public Integrity found to be a 50-state strategy to kill or weaken measures aimed at stemming the tide of prescription opioids. Limiting the amount of opioids a physician can prescribe to seven-day supplies is seen as a way to cut into the heroin and painkiller epidemic. (Serrano, 9/30)

Meanwhile, researchers speak out against a ban on a herbal supplement that helps addicts wean themselves of opioids. And KHN reports on overlooked medications that could help with alcohol abuse —

[WBUR: Impending Ban On Herbal Painkiller Kratom Could Hamper Research](#)

As of September 30, a relatively unknown herbal supplement called kratom will likely join the ranks of Schedule 1 drugs in the U.S. — alongside drugs like heroin, LSD and marijuana. This supplement has been traditionally used in Southeast Asia, but has recently gained popularity in the United States as a way to manage opioid withdrawal or chronic pain without the use of prescription medications. Researchers and people using the herb decry the DEA's move to criminalize it, which they say will stall research and deprive many Americans of a presumably harmless substitute to stronger prescription painkillers. (Smith, 9/30)

Kaiser Health News: Many Doctors Treating Alcohol Problems Overlook Successful Drugs

As millions of Americans battle alcohol abuse problems each year, public health officials suggest that two often overlooked medications might offer relief to some. More than 18 million people abuse or are dependent on alcohol, yet a key study funded by the federal government reported last year that only 20 percent will ever receive treatment of any kind. In fact, just slightly more than 1 million seek any type of formal help, ranging from a meeting with a counselor or a doctor to entering a specialized treatment program. (Yasinski, 10/3)

16. An Artificial Pancreas: The \$1M Challenge That Just Came To Fruition

In 2004, a millionaire investor challenged the JDRF, formerly known as the Juvenile Diabetes Research Fund, to develop an artificial pancreas. The organization jumped on it.

Stat: The Risky Bet Behind The First 'Artificial Pancreas' For Diabetes Patients

Twelve years ago, a dotcom millionaire stood at a patient advocacy group's board meeting and made an offer. I'll give you \$1 million, he said. But only if you commit to getting an artificial pancreas on the market. (Robbins, 10/3)

In other news —

The Philadelphia Inquirer: Monitoring Diabetes From Near And Afar

Nancy Warren's eyes snapped open at 2 a.m. one recent night. She automatically looked over at her phone, where she could see a continual display of her sister's blood-sugar reading. (Akman, 10/2)

17. Games' Promises Of A Better Brain Lack Scientific Backing, Exhaustive Analysis Finds

Brain games do help users get better at a certain task, but they show no real benefit in overall cognitive improvement. In other public health news, millions of Americans are struggling with treatment-resistant depression and a MacArthur genius's work with microbes could lead to a better understanding of diseases such as cystic fibrosis.

NPR: Brain Game Claims Fail A Big Scientific Test

Want to be smarter? More focused? Free of memory problems as you age? If so, don't count on brain games to help you. That's the conclusion of an exhaustive evaluation of the scientific literature on brain training games and programs. It was published Monday in the journal Psychological Science in the Public Interest. (Hamilton, 10/3)

California Healthline: When The Blues Won't Let You Be

Rini Kramer-Carter has tried everything to pull herself out of her dark emotional hole: individual therapy, support groups, tai chi and numerous antidepressants. The 73-year-old musician rattles off the list: Prozac, Cymbalta, Lexapro. "I've been on a bunch," she said. "I still cry all the time." She has what's known as "treatment-resistant depression. (Gorman, 10/3)

The Washington Post: Ask A MacArthur Genius: What Do Ancient Rocks And Cystic Fibrosis Have In Common?

Ask Caltech microbiologist Dianne Newman what she does for a living, and she'll answer with a chuckle: "I study weird forms of metabolism." She has spent a career studying the strange ways in which microscopic organisms get the food and energy they need in environments without oxygen — a quest that has taken her from geology to biology and from Earth's most ancient origins to the pathogens of today. (Blakemore, 9/30)

18. Outbreak In California Highlights Dangers Of Water Used In Dental Procedures

Officials say 25 cases of bacterial infection have been linked to a dental clinic in Orange County, Calif., after the children received baby root canals.

[NPR: Contaminated Water Can Infect Dental Patients, Though Cases Are Rare](#)

When people go to the dentist, they generally expect to leave in better health than when they walked in. But the water that dentists use to rinse teeth sometimes carries infectious bacteria. The Orange County Health Care Agency in California says that nearly two dozen children who received so-called baby root canals, or pulpotomies, are thought to have developed dangerous bacterial infections. Dentists perform pulpotomies to remove infected pulp inside a baby tooth so the rest of the tooth can be spared. (Ross, 9/30)

[The Mercury News: 25 Kids Now Sickened In California Dental Outbreak](#)

The county's Health Care Agency on Friday put the number of children who contracted serious dental infections at an Anaheim clinic at 25. The agency said the 25 patients, whose ages range from 3 to 9, were all hospitalized at some point. The affected children underwent pulpotomies, or baby tooth root canals, at Children's Dental Group in Anaheim between April 6 and July 28. Earlier this week, the Health Care Agency said six children remain hospitalized. (Bharath, 10/1)

In other news —

[The Washington Post: Does Gum Disease Have A Link To Cancer, Dementia, Stroke?](#)

Open wide. There's a host of researchers peering inside your mouth, and you may be surprised at what they hope to find. They're looking for a connection between gum disease and illnesses such as breast cancer and even dementia. (Levingston, 10/1)

[The Washington Post: Here's What Dentists Recommend, Including Flossing Your Teeth](#)

Maintaining oral health means following advice so familiar it's almost boring: Brush for two minutes twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste. Clean between teeth once a day with floss, a small brush or pick. And visit your dentist regularly. (The American Dental Association, commenting on recent reports that evidence doesn't support flossing, says that doesn't mean such cleaning isn't effective.) (Levingston, 10/1)

HEALTH IT

19. Pilot Program Uses Telemedicine To Treat Appalachia's Painkiller Addiction Crisis

In other health IT news, a California medical center is using a federal grant to implement a telehealth program to manage patient care. And the medical data of about 5,000 patients in California may have been lost due to a technical glitch.

[Kaiser Health News: Video-Chat? In Rural Areas Combating Drug Addiction, A New Way To Connect With Help](#)

An older, unemployed man with chronic back pain recently visited Dr. Robert Devereaux, a family physician in this Southwest corner of Virginia. Devereaux recalled that months earlier, during a routine exam, he found crushed fragments of painkiller pills inside the patient's nose. Though he

refused to prescribe more, Devereaux worries that the man is still getting the drugs and has not recognized his problem or gotten treatment for his addiction. (Luthra, 10/3)

[Sacramento Bee: Baxter Medical Center To Monitor Patients Via Telehealth](#)

A \$320,538 grant from the United States Department of Agriculture is helping Baxter Regional Medical Center reduce its readmission rate while implementing a Complex Care Management, allowing staff members to better manage patients' care. The Baxter Bulletin reports that the grant was primarily developed around the telehealth, a remote patient monitoring device that will be placed into patients' home. The telehealth device will benefit patients who are high-risk to return to the hospital, such as the ones who've suffered from pneumonia, a heart attack, congestive heart failure and others. (Louis, 10/1)

[The Mercury News: Marin Patients' Medical Data Lost After Cyber Attack](#)

The Marin Healthcare District and Prima Medical Foundation are notifying more than 5,000 patients that some of their medical data was lost due to a glitch that followed a ransomware attack in August. Prima Medical Foundation supports the Prima Medical Group, many of whose doctors work closely with Marin General Hospital. The computer records of Marin Medical Practice Concepts, a Novato company that provides medical billing and electronic medical records services to many Marin physicians, were hacked on July 26. (Halstead, 9/30)

STATE WATCH

20. State Highlights: Calif.'s Biggest Industry Is Now Medical Care; Urgent Care Biz Takes Hold In Twin Cities

Outlets report on health news from California, Minnesota, Massachusetts, Kansas, North Carolina, Virginia, Missouri, Iowa and Michigan.

[Sacramento Bee: Medical Care Now California's Biggest Industry, Dwarfing All Others](#)

A new UCLA Center for Health Policy Research study reveals that we Californians are directly or indirectly spending a mind-numbing \$367.5 billion a year on our physical well-being, equal to 15 percent of the state's \$2.5 trillion economy. That makes it, by a huge margin, our largest industry, dwarfing such high-profile California mainstays as movies, agriculture, aerospace and tourism. The \$50 billion film industry, for instance, is scarcely one-seventh the size. (Walters, 10/1)

[The Star Tribune: The Urgent Care Business Is About To Get A Lot Bigger In The Twin Cities](#)

Urgent care clinics are proliferating across the Twin Cities as patients footing a bigger share of their medical bills hunt for convenience. Up to 19 new urgent care centers will be rolled out across Minnesota by the end of next year by the Optum unit of Minnetonka-based UnitedHealth Group, bringing a 20 percent increase in the state from just one provider. Hospitals and clinics that have been offering urgent care for several years also are promising expansions, setting up a battle to retain patients and capture new business. (Snowbeck, 10/1)

[Boston Globe: State's Shaken-Baby Prevention Campaign Stalls](#)

When Stacey Nee delivered her second child, nurses talked to her about breastfeeding, safe sleeping practices, and postpartum depression, but she took note of what they did not mention: the potentially angry emotions, even dangerous actions, that can be stirred by a chronically crying baby. The omission was particularly jarring to Nee, who works at the Children's Trust in Boston, an agency that helped implement a 2006 state law calling on maternity wards to train parents, before discharge, about the dangers of shaken-baby syndrome. (Wen, 9/30)

[Los Angeles Times: Thousands Of Deaths From Hospital Superbugs Are Going Unreported, Research Shows](#)

Many thousands of Californians are dying every year from infections they caught while in hospitals. But you'd never know that from their death certificates. Sharley McMullen of Manhattan Beach came down with a fever just hours after being wheeled out of a Torrance Memorial Medical Center operating room on May 4, 2014. A missionary's daughter who worked as a secretary at Cape Canaveral, Fla., at the height of the space race, McMullen, 72, was there for treatment of a bleeding stomach ulcer. Soon, though, she was fighting for her life. (Petersen, 10/2)

[Kansas Health Institute: Kansas Infant Mortality Rate Drops In 2015](#)

Kansas recorded its lowest-ever infant mortality rate in 2015, when 230 infants died before their first birthday, according to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. (Thompson, 9/30)

[WBUR: Mass. Department Of Public Health Recommends Boston Children's Expansion Move Forward](#)

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has recommended a planned \$1 billion clinical building at Boston Children's Hospital be approved. In a statement released Friday, DPH says its staff has determined the proposed building "meets the regulatory requirements and includes many positive aspects to improve care for the children and families the hospital serves. "The agency's Public Health Council will vote on the project on Oct. 20. (Jolicoeur, 9/30)

[Boston Globe: State Department Of Public Health Recommends Approval Of Children's Hospital Expansion](#)

Massachusetts health regulators said Friday that Boston Children's Hospital should be allowed to go forward with a \$1 billion expansion project, a recommendation that seeks to support one of the state's premier hospitals without undermining efforts to control medical spending. The staff at the Department of Public Health recommended approval of the plan to build an 11-story building in Longwood and an eight-story outpatient clinic in Brookline. The expansion has sparked controversy over its potential to drive up health care costs. (Dayal McCluskey, 9/30)

[California Healthline: California Governor Signs Flurry Of Health Laws](#)

Gov. Jerry Brown signed off on a variety of bills in September that aim to protect patients and health care consumers. The following laws are set to go into effect in 2017. (Ibarra, 10/3)

[Sacramento Bee: Sacramento-Area Clinics Offer Free Breast Cancer Screenings](#)

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month starts Saturday, and clinics around Sacramento will be offering free breast cancer screenings to promote early detection of the disease. A mammography screening can help reduce the likelihood of death from breast cancer among women ages 40 to 74, especially for those older than 50, according to the National Cancer Institute. (Caiola, 9/30)

[The Star Tribune: Legionnaire's Investigation Redoubled As 3 New Cases Arise](#)

State health investigators are intensifying efforts to pinpoint the source of the Hopkins outbreak of Legionnaires' disease even as three new cases were confirmed Friday. The outbreak has now sickened 23 people and led to one death. After weeks of testing and disease tracking, epidemiologists at the Minnesota Department of Health still have not found ground zero of the outbreak, but they are looking at a likely culprit. (Howatt, 10/1)

[North Carolina Health News: Survey: N.C.'s Health Care System Ranks 40th In The U.S.](#)

North Carolina has fallen behind in the quality of and access to its health care system, according to a new survey by the personal-finance website Wallet Hub. One of the state's leading health economists said it's not surprising given some of the economics of North Carolina and the fact that its residents have some of the highest rates of obesity, diabetes and heart disease in the United States. (Hoban, 9/30)

[Richmond Times Dispatch: Chesterfield Medical Practice Becomes Patient-Centered: 'This Isn't Just Change, It's Transformation'](#)

Dr. Ted Abernathy has fundamentally changed the way his medical practice operates. Now, patients know the nurses and receptionists as well as their physicians. Day-to-day tasks are distributed among the staff to streamline operations, freeing up time that providers can then spend with patients. It took more than a year for Abernathy's practice, Midlothian-based Pediatric & Adolescent Health Partners, to achieve certification as a patient-centered medical home, a philosophy of care that calls for a coordination among providers and staff that is always focused on the patient. (Demeria, 10/1)

[Boston Globe: Home Health Company, Executives Indicted For Health-Care Fraud](#)

A Worcester-based home health agency and three people involved with the company have been indicted by a grand jury for allegedly defrauding the state's Medicaid program of more than \$800,000. Compassionate Homecare Inc. provided nursing and other services for low-income patients on the government program known here as MassHealth. The agency is accused of conducting "numerous fraudulent schemes" and billing the state for providing services to patients who didn't need them, and for services that were never authorized by a doctor, in violation of rules. (Dayal McCluskey, 9/30)

[St. Louis Post-Dispatch: Care For Caregivers: Report Finds They Are Often Ignored](#)

About 12 years ago, Nancy Menchhofer's husband was diagnosed with Alzheimer's at the age of 59. When she moved him to a care facility five years ago, it was the hardest thing she had ever done. Menchhofer visits him once a week and feeds him lunch. He doesn't know who she is or why she's there. (Munz, 10/2)

[The Mercury News: Stanford Health Care Sued For Negligence In Patient Molestation Case](#)

A 16-year-old boy who was sexually abused while under anesthesia at Stanford Health Care is suing the hospital system for negligence. The lawsuit, filed in San Mateo County Superior Court on Thursday, alleges that some Stanford employees did not report what they saw and hospital officials should have known the abuser had a "proclivity to have inappropriate sexual contact" because of past encounters. The suit also stated some Stanford leaders fostered a toxic environment by allowing a group of managers to band together and look out for each other, including the abuser, while retaliating against those who spoke out. (Lee, 9/30)

[The Des Moines Register: Survey: School Sexual Assault Training Lacking](#)

Almost without exception, when a student who's being abused by a parent or caregiver goes to any school in Iowa, every teacher, counselor and building administrator knows what to do. But that's not necessarily the case if the same student reports she or he has been sexually assaulted by another student or staff member, a Des Moines Register survey of 25 school districts suggests. (Rood, 10/2)

[The Detroit Free Press: Medical Marijuana Regulation Among Bills Made Into Law](#)

With the Legislature only in session for three weeks after its summer break, there weren't a whole lot of bills for Gov. Rick Snyder to sign. But he did sign long-stalled bills to regulate and tax the medical marijuana industry. The bills will allow communities to decide whether and where they want medical marijuana dispensaries located in their towns. The bills also provide for licensing fees, annual assessments and a 3% tax on retail gross income of dispensaries. (Gray, 10/1)

[Boston Globe: Marijuana Dispensaries A Tough Sell In Many Communities](#)

Four years after Massachusetts residents — including voters in Hopkinton, Seekonk, and Southborough — overwhelmingly approved legalizing marijuana for medical use, dispensaries have become the ultimate not-in-my-backyard symbol in many towns. Just seven dispensaries have cleared local hurdles and opened since voters backed medical marijuana in 2012. Yet the law put no

restrictions on the number of dispensaries allowed after the first year. (Lazar, 10/3)

EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS

21. Positive And Negative Takes On Obamacare's Future

Opinion writers express varying thoughts on the health law's implementation.

[The Wall Street Journal: An Illegal Bailout For ObamaCare](#)

We keep reading that Donald Trump poses a unique threat to constitutional norms if he's elected. His liberal critics would have more credibility if they called out the Obama Administration for its current (not potential) abuses of power, and here's an opportunity: The Administration is crafting an illegal bailout to prop up the President's health-care law. (9/30)

[The Washington Post: Republicans Predicted An Obamacare Apocalypse. It Hasn't Happened.](#)

It was a case of the dog that didn't bark. For 90 minutes on Monday, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton clashed in their first presidential debate on a full range of issues. But meriting not a single mention? Obamacare. The Affordable Care Act ripped apart the nation and dominated political argument for several years. But now, six years after enactment, Obamacare isn't on the radar screen during this election. And for good reason: The predicted apocalypse has not occurred. (Dana Milbank, 9/30)

[Lincoln Journal Star: Need To Fix ACA Grows More Urgent](#)

The Affordable Care Act delivered another shock to Nebraskans when Blue Cross Blue Shield announced that it no longer could afford to sell health insurance through the federal marketplace exchange. The announcement is the third in a series of blows to the health care system in the state. Earlier this year UnitedHealth Group announced it would no longer sell individual exchange policies. Prior to that CoOpportunity Health, which operated in Nebraska, collapsed and its customers had to find coverage elsewhere. (10/1)

[Forbes: The Public Option Isn't Really An 'Option'](#)

The problem is, there is no way a "public option" could be sustainable – both as "public" and as an "option." The reason is, any public plan would have to operate on the basis one of the following two principles, and each one excludes either the sustainability, or its ability to remain an "option." These principles are: 1. The program must be self-supporting; that is, health care costs and administrative costs must be paid for out of premiums received (except possible for taxpayer-funded start-up costs). 2. The program must continue to exist, and be available to all customers who want it in all parts of the country, at "affordable" prices. (Robert Book, 9/30)

22. State Ballot Initiatives, Policy Issues Draw Editorial Page Attention

News outlets offer perspectives on pending ballot questions.

[The Denver Post: Yes On Amendment 69: Coloradans Should Take Back Their Health Care](#)

Coloradans have always been pioneers. With an innovative spirit, we've had the courage to overcome adversity, seize opportunity, and turn bold visions into reality. Today, with ColoradoCare, we're on the frontier of a health care revolution. (Irene Aguilar, 9/30)

[Sacramento Bee: Parents Should Be Wary Of Marijuana Legalization](#)

Marijuana is a complicated issue. I support its medicinal use and have introduced federal legislation

to make it easier to research and potentially bring marijuana-derived medicines to the market with FDA approval... But Proposition 64 would allow marijuana of any strength to be sold. (Dianne Feinstein, 10/1)

[Los Angeles Times: Vote Yes On Proposition 56 To Raise California's Too-Low Tobacco Tax](#)

Everyone knows that tobacco kills, but still, the numbers are staggering. In California alone, some 40,000 adults die each year as a result of smoking or secondhand smoke, and the amount spent annually on healthcare directly related to tobacco exceeds \$13 billion. Nationally, the death toll is 480,000. Americans, for better or worse, have decided that this nasty, lethal drug should remain legal. So government's approach is to discourage smoking where it can. It restricts advertising, requires warnings on cigarette packs, bars sales to minors — and, most effectively, it levies "sin taxes" designed to make smoking prohibitively expensive. (9/30)

[Lexington Herald Leader: Raise Tobacco Tax High Enough For Real Impact](#)

There is ample evidence from around the country that has proven regular and significant increases in tobacco taxes, like the \$1.50 increase per cigarette pack supported by the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network and other public health groups, are necessary to ensure the state will benefit fully from a public-health standpoint. Tobacco tax increases of less than \$1 per pack have far less impact on teen- and adult-smoking rates because the tobacco industry can easily offset the smaller cost increases through temporary price cuts, coupons and other promotional discounting. (Pam Pilgrim, 9/30)

23. Viewpoints: Health Costs At Home And Abroad; Candidates' Health Policy Details; VA And Suicides

A selection of opinions on health care from around the country.

[The St. Louis Post Dispatch: Why Do People In Other Developed Nations Get Better Health Care At Half The Price?](#)

We are a nation of patsies when it comes to health care. We're paying roughly twice what other wealthy nations pay for medical care that seems no better. (Jim Gallagher, 10/2)

[Bloomberg: Testing Health-Care Providers' Threshold for Pain](#)

Regulators have been playing a vast and costly game of whack-a-mole since the creation of Medicare and Medicaid 40 years ago. Regulators decide we're spending too much on something, and reduce or disallow that spending. That budget line item duly drops, and yet health-care spending does not, because some other category has risen to compensate. ... The latest hotness in cost control is called "all payer." The idea is that without such a system, hospitals and doctors exploit pricing disparities between various categories of payer, with governments generally paying less and private insurers paying more. ... Vermont, having tried and failed to build a single-payer system, is now prepared to embark on a new experiment with all-payer. (Megan McArdle, 9/30)

[Los Angeles Times: A Medical Journal Invited Both Candidates To Describe Their Healthcare Ideas. Guess Which One Responded.](#)

Serious candidates for office don't normally shun golden opportunities to outline their policies for an attentive audience. So when the New England Journal of Medicine invited the two top presidential candidates to describe their goals and plans for American healthcare in their administrations, Hillary Clinton jumped at the chance. Donald Trump didn't respond at all. (Michael Hiltzik, 9/30)

[The New York Times: A Quest To Gather All My Medical Records In 72 Hours](#)

When Donald Trump challenged Hillary Clinton to a medical records disclosure throwdown not long ago, my colleague Margot Sanger-Katz wrote an article pointing out that there's often no such thing

as a complete medical dossier on anyone. After all, most of us have seen many doctors over many decades, with details scattered hither and yon. Tracking them down would be a nightmare, the specialists in medical records and technology say. But that kind of quest is my kind of fun. (Ron Lieber, 9/30)

[RealClear Health: Why Bruce Springsteen's Depression Revelation Matters](#)

Springsteen has long been committed to social justice; in writing about depression, he has perhaps undertaken a new cause, one that seeks to combat the stereotypes and stigmas about mental illness that still exist today. Struggles with mental illness are common and familiar among rock and pop stars. They include Beyoncé, Eric Clapton, Kurt Cobain, Sheryl Crow, Janet Jackson, Billy Joel, Jon Bon Jovi, Alicia Keys, Lady Gaga, John Lennon, Alanis Morissette and Brian Wilson. ... The medical literature, though limited, strongly indicates that being a rock star is a high-stress lifestyle. But Springsteen's disclosure is arguably unique because his image runs counter to stereotypes of depression. (Alex Lubet, 10/3)

[The New York Times: Medicating A Prophet](#)

He said he had come to the emergency room to preach. I encouraged him to check into the hospital for care. He refused, and I considered my options. I could allow him to leave, or I could admit him involuntarily. I knew, though, that if we gave him antipsychotic medication, he would realize that he was a homeless man with AIDS. Would he rather stay a prophet? Did he have the right to choose psychosis? Did I have the right to choose for him? (Irene Hurford, 10/1)

[The Wall Street Journal: The VA's Faltering Battle Against Veteran Suicide](#)

In 2012, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced an initiative to hire an additional 1,600 mental health professionals. Two years later, it announced another initiative to expand further the ranks. Last year, Congress passed, and the president signed, the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act, named after a decorated Marine who killed himself in 2011 after struggling with PTSD. But the bottom line is that despite these initiatives, the VA has not been able to expand its services to meet the need—and the tragic loss of life continues. ... the time is long overdue to face an essential fact: Suicides by veterans have continued unabated, and the VA has not been able to meet the needs of those it serves. It is time for Congress and the administration to take ownership of this issue. (Robert M. Morgenthau, 10/2)

[Modern Healthcare: A Mixed Picture On Public Health](#)

Over the past year, there have been several reports indicating America's health status has taken a turn for the worse. Life expectancy for white women took a small but unexpected dip in 2014, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported last April. And nearly a year ago, a paper from two leading economists revealed that life expectancy for whites has been declining for nearly two decades, with almost all of the decrease concentrated among men and women without a college education. (Merrill Goozner, 10/1)

[Stat: Harvard's Low-Income Workers Deserve Affordable Health Insurance](#)

There's an outbreak of a hidden epidemic — unaffordable employer-based health insurance, especially for low-income workers — at Harvard, a place where it should never occur. As medical students at Harvard, we were deeply troubled to learn that our university was proposing changes to dining workers' health plans that would make essential health care unaffordable. After months of negotiation, the dining workers' union voted to authorize a strike, which will launch on Wednesday if a deal is not reached. The campus has rallied around the workers, circulating a petition of support signed by 2,500 students, including us, in advance of federal mediation held earlier this week. In the dining workers' fight with Harvard, we see a microcosm of current challenges for health insurance across America. (Micah Johnson and Sanjay Kishore, 9/30)

[The Hill: Technology Can Be Used To Bridge The Gap Between Doctor's Visits](#)

Oncologists can only capture a pixelated snapshot of their patients' health because, on average, they see patients undergoing chemotherapy for only eight minutes every third week. Can we make use of the missing 30,000 minutes in between doctor's visits? (Peter Kuhn, 9/30)

[Los Angeles Times: EpiPens And Other Soaring Drug Prices Aren't Just Hard On People. They Hurt Pets, Too](#)

"Obamacare never reached pets," said Doug Hirsch, co-chief executive of Santa Monica's GoodRX, a price-comparison website for prescription meds that also includes drugs taken by dogs and cats. "They're very much bearing the brunt of high drug prices." Pet owners will spend nearly \$63 billion this year, according to the American Pet Products Assn. Such expenditures — including food, supplies, toys, over-the-counter medications and veterinary care — topped \$60 billion for the first time last year. (David Lazarus, 9/30)

[Taking Note: The Right To Sue — Restored](#)

Starting on Nov. 28, placing yourself or your loved one in a nursing home will no longer require signing away your legal rights. Under a breakthrough ruling on Wednesday, regulators for Medicare and Medicaid have barred nursing homes that receive federal funding from requiring residents to agree in advance to resolve disputes in arbitration, instead of in court. The end of pre-dispute arbitration clauses in nursing home contracts means the end of a pervasive practice that has long shielded nursing homes from liability for claims involving neglect, abuse, harassment, assault and wrongful death. (Teresa Tritch, 9/30)

[RealClear Health: The Patent Truth: The Access To Medicines Debate](#)

Bill Gates and Abraham Lincoln are in agreement. Gates, whose foundation funds the development and distribution of new medicines in the developing world, said the U.S. system "is better than most other systems one can imagine The drug companies are turning out miracles, and we need their R&D budgets to stay strong. They need to see the opportunity." It turns out that Mr. Gates is in good company. Lincoln, the only U.S. President to hold a patent, called the IP system, "the fuel of interest which fires man's genius." (Carol Adelman and Jeremiah Norris, 10/3)

[The Philadelphia Inquirer: Marketers See A Gold Mine In Private Health Data](#)

The security of medical data is increasingly under threat, especially as health systems across the United States convert patients' thick paper files into electronic medical records; the U.S. Government Accountability Office reported last month that health data breaches exposed 113 million patients' records to potential theft and fraud in 2015 alone. (Mary F. E. Ebeling, 10/3)

[Cincinnati Enquirer: Nutrition Matters More Than We Want To Think](#)

Sadly, very few people understand — or want to believe — how much good nutrition plays a critical role in their quality of life. They follow the latest fad hoping for the fastest results when science tells us that slow and steady wins the race. It's rare for people to seek out the expert advice of a registered dietitian for personalized information on how to integrate science-based, simple changes for better health. (Lisa Andrews, 9/30)

Note to readers: For KHN coverage of late life care, check out our new [resource](#). This coverage is supported in part by The John A. Hartford Foundation.

Update your [email preferences](#) to choose the types of emails you receive. Or, [permanently unsubscribe](#) from all emails.

If you need help or have questions, please send an email to subscriptions@kaiserhealthnews.org
Please do not reply to this email as this address is not monitored.

Kaiser Family Foundation & Kaiser Health News | 2400 Sand Hill Road | Menlo Park, CA 94025